approved varieties and undertaking of an awareness and education programme for farmers.

(c) The three approved hybrid varieties are presently under cultivation only in six states namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Some of the fields where these hybrid varieties are being cultivated have recently been monitored by the Committees constituted by this Ministry for each state. The Committees found the performance of Bt. Cotton satisfactory.

(d) There is no proposal from the Government to ban the sale of Bt Cotton seeds in India.

(e) M/s Proagro PGS India Ltd. Gurgaon requested approval of GEAC for commercial cultivation of transgenic mustard. The GEAC in the 34th Meeting held on 7th November, 2002 considered the proposal but no final decision was taken.

(f) The biosafety assessment includes molecular characterization of the gene (s), biochemical characterization of the expressed proteins, estimation of level of expressed proteins, safety of the expressed proteins to the non-target organisms, environmental fate of expressed proteins, pollen escape, outcrossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect on non-target organisms, confirmation of the absence of Terminator Gene, and baseline susceptibility studies and agronomic, compositional and food and feed safety evaluation of transgenic hybrids as compared to the non-transgenic counterpart.

Field trials of Bt. Cotton and Mustard seeds

†2404. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have permitted field trials of Cotton and Mustard Seeds, modified by Genetic Engineering;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the farmers had a very bad experience with regard to Cotton seeds, modified by Genetic Engineering;

(c) whether the conclusions of Indian Council of Agricultural Research on proposed Mustard seeds are not being made public; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the reasons for sanctioning the field trials of Mustard seeds also?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) accorded conditional approval in March, 2002 for commercial release of three Bt Cotton hybrids developed by Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company into the environment. M/s proagro Seeds Company Ltd. has sought the approval of the GEAC for commercial cultivation of transgenic mustard. The GEAC in its meeting held on 7th November, 2002 deferred the decision on the proposal for further examination of the data.

(b) The three approved hybrid Bt Cotton varieties (Bt MECH-162, Bt. MECH-184, Bt. MECH-12) are presently under cultivation only in six states namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Some of the fields where these hybrid varieties are being cultivated have recently been monitored by a Committee constituted by this Ministry. The Committee found the performance of Bt. Cotton satisfactory.

(c) The results of the field trials of GM mustard conducted by ICAR have been published in the Annual Progress Report, 2002 published by Indian Council of Agricultural Research under the All India Co-ordinated Research Project on Rapeseed-Mustard.

(d) As per the statutory requirement the company has carried out research activities and small scale trial after due approval of the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM). The trials have been conducted as per Department of Biotechnology guidelines. The Monitoring-cum-Evaluation Committee (MEC) of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has monitored the trials at various stages prior to approval of RCGM and GEAC. Based on the recommendation of the MEC and RCGM, the GEAC in its 27th Meeting held on 8th August, 2001 permitted M/s Proagro Seeds Company Ltd. to conduct large scale open field trials. The results of the large scale trials were considered by the GEAC in the meeting held on 7th November, 2002. The GEAC desired further examination of the data.